

## Message Text

SECRET

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15

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SP-02 INR-07 PRS-01 RSC-01 PM-03

L-01 DODE-00 MC-01 IO-03 H-01 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

EUR-08 ( ISO ) W

----- 035132

P R 150810Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 778

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

S E C R E T MUSCAT 067

LIMDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, MU

SUBJECT: STATUS OF DHOFAR CAMPAIGN AS OF JANUARY 14

REF: MUSCAT 37 (NOTAL); MUSCAT 31 (BEING PASSED INFO ADDEES)

SUMMARY: SAF STYMIED IN ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE SHIRISHITTI STRONG-HOLD. LOGISTIC CONSIDERATIONS DICTATE SAF WITHDRAWAL FROM AREA NOT LATER THAN JANUARY 20. IRANIAN FORCES HAVE BEEN TASKED WITH CONSTRUCTING NEW "DAMAVAND LINE" RUNNING FROM RAKHYUT TO MANSTON. ONCE THIS IS IN PLACE (HOPEFULLY BEFORE SAF PULLS BACK), SAF WILL MOVE FROM HORNBEAM LINE TO SWEEP INTERVENING AREA; NET RESULT WILL BE ACCRETION OF 40 KILOMETER STRIP OF TERRITORY TO OMANGOV CONTROL. WHILE DISAPPOINTED BY FAILURE TO TAKE SHIRISHITTI, CSAF CREASEY BELIEVES THAT LATEST EFFORT ACCOMPLISHED A GREAT DEAL. HE IS HOPEFUL THAT PFLO WILL FEEL SO-THREATENED THAT THEY WILL WITHDRAW BEHIND

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PDRY BORDER. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING COURSE OF JANUARY 14 DISCUSSION OF ANOTHER TOPIC, CHARGE TOOK OPPORTUNITY TO ASK CSAF CREASEY ABOUT STATUS OF SITUATION IN DHOFAR. SINCE OTHERS PRESENT (DEPUTY DEFENSE MINISTER SAYYID FAHAR AMONG THEM), CSAF MAY HAVE TAILORED HIS REPORT SLIGHTLY.

2. CSAF FRANKLY ADMITTED THAT REPORTS RE SAF HAVING TAKEN SHIRISHITTI (MUSCAT 37) WERE OVERLY OPTIMISTIC. IN FACT, JANUARY 6 SAF OPERATIONS AGAINST THAT HEAVILY DEFENDED ENEMY POSITION WAS A "NEAR THING...THE WAR COULD HAVE GONE EITHER WAY THAT DAY..." HE ESTIMATED THAT THERE ARE ABOUT 170 REBELS HOLED UP IN SHIRISHITTI, AND THAT IT WOULD COST SAF 200-300 CASUALTIES TO TAKE POSITION. THIS WOULD BE UNACCEPTABLY HIGH COST FOR A FORCE THE SIZE OF SAF (N.B. ABOUT 12,000); HENCE, HAVING FAILED ON THAT TRY, SAF NOW WILL ABANDON--AT LEAST TEMPORARILY--THIS OBJECTIVE.

3. DESPITE THIS DISAPPOINTMENT, CSAF FEELS THAT EFFORT HAS BEEN WORTHWHILE. SAF HAS INFLICTED HEAVY CASUALTIES ON ENEMY (COMBINED FIGURES GIVEN AS 40 CONFIRMED KIA WITH LARGER, BUT NATURALLY UNDEFINED, NUMBER OF WIA SINCE OFFENSIVE BEGAN ON DECEMBER 2, IMPLICATION BEING THAT LARGE PERCENTAGE OF THESE RESULTED FROM SAF ACTION AGAINST SHIRISHITTI). SAF CASUALTIES DURING SAME PERIOD GIVEN AS 14 KIA AND 26 WIA.

4. AS HE ANTICIPATED EARLIER (MUSCAT 927 NOTAL), CSAF WILL HAVE TO PULL BACK SAF BATTALION NO LATER THAN JAN. 20 WHEN HE WILL HAVE TO REDIRECT HELICOPTER LOGISTICS SUPPORT CAPABILITIES TO RESUPPLY SIMBA POSITIONS. (N.B. BASED ON ONE COMMENT HE MADE, CSAF MIGHT PREFER TO ABANDON SIMBA BUT HE IS "NOT PERMITTED TO DO SO...") CHARGE ASKED IF HE HAD PURSUED FURTHER QUESTION OF ARRANGING OTHER SUPPORT CAPABILITY; CSAF SAID HE HAD BROACHED SUBJECT WITH GENERAL AZHARI, BUT THAT IRANIANS ONLY ABLE TO OFFER ONE HELICOPTER WHICH WOULD BE INSUFFICIENT TO TASK. ALTHOUGH WITHDRAWAL DICTATED BY LOGISTIC CONSIDERATIONS, ANTICIPATED CASUALTY-COST OF FURTHER OPERATIONS IN AREA AT THIS TIME RULES OUT ANY RECONSIDERATION OF THIS ASPECT OF CAMPAIGN.

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5. CSAF REPORTED THAT SHAH HAS GIVEN APPROVAL FOR IRANIAN FORCES TO CONSTRUCT A NEW BARRIER RUNNING FROM RAKHYUT TO MANSTON. THE "DAMAVAND LINE" WILL COMPRISE A PARALLEL RUN OF BARBED WIRE WITH A MINE FIELD LAID BETWEEN. IRANIANS WILL SUPPLY MATERIAL, CONSTRUCT, AND DEFEND NEW LINE. HOPEFULLY IT WILL BE IN PLACE BEFORE SAF WITHDRAWAL. (COMMENT: THIS SEEMS OPTIMISTIC, GIVEN ROUGH TERRAIN AND APPROXIMATELY 30 KILOMETER FRONT INVOLVED.)

6. ONCE "DAMAVAND LINE" IN PLACE, SAF WILL MOVE OUT FROM HORNBEAM POSITIONS TO SWEEP INTERVENING AREA. SUCCESS IN SUCH OPERATION WOULD RESULT IN ACCRETION OF APPROXIMATELY 40 KILOMETER-WIDE STRIP TO OMANGOV CONTROL. IN THEORY, HORNBEAM WILL WITHER ON VINE TO BE REPLACED BY DAMAVAND.

7. CSAF HOPEFUL THAT RESULTANT PROXIMITY TO ENEMY POSITIONS, COMBINED WITH SAF AND IRANIAN ATTACKS AGAINST SHIRISHITTI AND CAPTURE OF RAKHYUT, WILL CAUSE ENEMY TO WITHDRAW BEHIND PDRY BORDER.

8. CSAF STATED THAT F-5'S COULD ARRIVE AT MIDWAY AS EARLY AS JAN. 16, ALTHOUGH HE HOPES FOR SOME FURTHER DELAY SINCE NOT ALL INFRASTRUCTURE IN PLACE. AT ANY RATE, ANTICIPATED ARRIVAL OF F-5'S AND BEEFED UP ANTI-TANK CAPABILITIES WILL SIGNAL END TO PDRY'S PREVIOUS AIR AND TANK SUPERIORITY. IN CSAF'S OPINION, PDRY MUST SOON DECIDE WHETHER TO PAY POLITICAL COST OF ESCALATING WAR VIA OVERT INTERVENTION. IN ABSENCE OF SUCH A DECISION ON PART OF ENEMY, OMAN AND HER ALLIES CLEARLY WILL HAVE GAINED ALMOST IRREVERSIBLE ADVANTAGE.  
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